



CITY OF ORILLIA
ENVIRONMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES DEPARTMENT
PARKS DIVISION

Bench & Tree Donation Program

Guidelines

February 11, 2026, REVISION



CITY OF ORILLIA
ENVIRONMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES DEPARTMENT
PARKS DIVISION
BENCH & TREE DONATION PROGRAM

GENERAL GUIDELINES

The Bench and Tree Donation Program is designed to increase public enjoyment and participation in the City's parks (includes all parks and trails). Benches and trees make great gifts to both your beneficiary and your favorite park. Best of all, your donation helps support parks citywide!

People may donate towards new benches or trees **provided space is available in the location desired**. Donations are also available to existing benches and trees. Whether existing or new, a donor recognition plaque will be installed on or near your donation.

Only bench and tree donations are covered by these guidelines. A donor requesting any other donation, dedication or memorial must apply to the Environment and Infrastructure Services Department with the City of Orillia.

Donations should meet several key criteria:

- Donations must contribute to public enjoyment of parks, and not interfere with accessibility or use of the park by any member of the public.
- The "look and feel" of donations, and how they are used, should not detract from the existing theme or use of a park area.
- staff need to be able to continue their regular maintenance of park areas, so donations should not interfere with those activities.

Your donation will become a part of the park for everyone's enjoyment. In return, you will be recognized for your contribution by a plaque placed on or near your donation. However, because the donation becomes public property, donors should be aware that they do not have any right to priority use of their donation. Also, while Park staff do their best to maintain all the features of our parks in good condition, and make repairs as needed, donated items cannot be given priority treatment.

The following guidelines apply for selecting a location for donated assets:

- The asset proposed for installation must be conducive to maintaining the appearance of the surrounding park area.
- The donor can select from existing undedicated benches and trees, or if available have a new bench or tree installed with the approval of the Department.
- The asset must not interfere with the enjoyment of, or accessibility to, park areas or amenities for any member of the public.
- The asset must not, due to its location or materials, unduly interfere with existing maintenance activities for the area in which it is installed. For example, a bench installed in the centre of a large open field would interfere with grass trimming operations usually done with large equipment.
- Locations where there has been a recurring problem with vandalism and abuse to park assets will be avoided. If a donor wishes to have an asset installed in such a location despite this knowledge, the Department reserves the right to relocate or remove the asset.
- If circumstances arise that require an asset be relocated, the Department will attempt to contact the donor to advise them of the relocation. The Department will make the final determination.
- Administration staff will ask you to fill out the *Bench and Tree Donation Program Application*, which will collect information needed to order and install your donation. This will include the wording for your donor plaque. You will need to provide payment for the donation, which covers the purchase, installation, and maintenance of your donation. Staff will provide a receipt for your payment, and a charitable donation receipt will be mailed to you by the City's Finance Department.
- Staff will work with you to determine donation availability, type and location. You may be invited to attend an on-site meeting with Park staff after your application has been approved and payment received. At this meeting you will confirm what type of park asset you wish to donate, and with the Staff you will verify its exact location. The Department will have the final determination as to type of donation and location.
- A donation period for a bench will last 15 years. Within this time, the Department will replace a park bench donation and/or plaque up to two times if deemed necessary by the Department.
- After 15 years the donated bench asset will be available for renewal for the cost of a new donation with the first right of refusal given to the original donor. Every attempt will be made to contact the original donor. If the original donor opts not to renew, the donated bench asset and plaque may be removed or rededicated at any time.

("Department" – Environment and Infrastructure Department Asset – bench or tree)

Please note that there may be a waiting list for donations for some Orillia parks and trails, and some parks (particularly waterfront parks) may no longer be available for donations.

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Orillia Bench

BENCH DONATION – GUIDELINES

If you would like to donate a bench, follow these steps:

1. Decide in which park or section of trail you would like to situate the bench (it is a good idea to have a second choice in mind) and submit a completed *Bench and Tree Donation Program Application* to enviroservices@orillia.ca, or drop the completed form off in person to the Municipal Operations Centre at 20 James Street West in Orillia. Please ensure that your plaque wording is finalized at the time of submitting your application.
2. Your application will be reviewed. Once the application is approved, staff will contact you to arrange payment. You will be asked to provide payment by cash or cheque (made out to the "City of Orillia"), or debit card.
3. Once payment has been received, you *may* be called to arrange for an on-site meeting with Park staff.

Donation Amounts (effective January 1, 2026)

- **Standard Bench** **\$ 1,769.00** \$2,601.00 (on concrete pad – optional) **
- **Decorative Bench** **\$ 3,745.00** \$4,578.00 (on concrete pad – optional) **
(By-Law 2024-037, Chapter 456 of the City of Orillia Municipal Code – User fees – Recreation, Youth and Culture, Schedule A – User Fees – Tree and Bench Dedication Program)
- The donation amount includes bench, plaque, installation, maintenance and repair for a period of 15 years (You will have the option to renew this term when it expires).
** *Concrete pads are required in some park areas; Park staff will let the donor know if this is a requirement for the bench dedication applied.*
- Bench donations are tax deductible, and an official receipt will be issued to the donor by the City of Orillia.

Installation & Location Choices:

- Installations are seasonal and are done as weather and ground conditions permit. It could take three to four months for the plaque to be produced and installation to take place. There may be a waiting list for locations in some parks or trail sections.
- Once you have decided to proceed with a bench donation and have issued payment, as noted above, you may be contacted to arrange for an on-site meeting with Park staff to discuss the type of bench and location opportunities.
- Occasionally, there may be a need to relocate a donation if there are frequent repairs needed, or if the park area is undergoing new development. If this is the case, the Environmental Services Department with the City of Orillia undertakes the relocation and covers all of the costs. Every attempt will be made to notify the original donor.

The City understands that the bench may have sentimental value; however, it is not to be considered a memorial or shrine. For that reason, the City respectfully requests that placement of flowers, wreaths, pictures, etc. at the site or adding fixtures to the donated item is not permitted.

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TREE DONATION – GUIDELINES

If you would like to donate a tree, follow these steps:

1. Decide in which park you would like to situate the tree (it is a good idea to have a second choice in mind) and submit a completed *Bench and Tree Donation Program Application* (page 5) to enviroservices@orillia.ca, or drop the completed form off in person to the Municipal Operations Centre at 20 James Street West in Orillia. Please ensure that your plaque wording is finalized at the time of submitting your application (see guidelines on page 4). You will then be placed on a donation list.
2. When your name is next on the list, your application will be reviewed. Once the application is approved, we will contact you to arrange payment. You will be asked to provide payment by debit card, cash or cheque (made out to the "City of Orillia").
3. Once payment has been received, you will be called to arrange for an on-site meeting to discuss the exact location and the type (species) of tree with the City Arborist.

Donation Amounts (effective January 1, 2025):

- Standard Tree **\$ 468.00** (see standard tree list page 6)
- Special Order Tree **\$ 572.00**
- The donation amount includes the tree, plaque, installation and maintenance.
- Tree donations are tax deductible, and an official receipt will be issued to the donor by the City of Orillia.

Installation & Location Choices:

- There are two planting times per year in the spring and the fall. **Requests for spring planting must be received by March 1st and for fall planting by August 1st.**
- Once you have decided to proceed with a tree donation and have issued payment, as noted above, you may be contacted to arrange an on-site meeting with Staff to discuss the type (species) of tree and location opportunities. The City plants a number of different tree species and varieties that are considered appropriate for various locations in our parks. Each tree type must be considered in its specific location. If you are donating a new tree, the City Arborist will help you select a tree that suits a desired location.
- Occasionally there may be a need to relocate or change the type (species) of tree. If this is the case, the Environment and Infrastructure Services Department will undertake the relocation and cover all the costs. Every attempt will be made to notify the original donor.

Species of Trees:

- The species of trees available for planting may be selected from a list of approved species, available at the Municipal Operations Centre (20 James Street West, Orillia, ON). The City Arborist will have the final determination as to species and location.

The City understands that the tree may have sentimental value; however, it is not to be considered a memorial or shrine. For that reason, the City respectfully requests that placement of flowers, wreaths, pictures, etc. at the site or adding fixtures to the donated item is not permitted.

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DONOR PLAQUE WORDING – GUIDELINES

Inscription guidelines:

The wording should keep the theme of the inscriptions uplifting, inspirational or promote enjoyment of the park or trail area in which the asset is located, while still honoring the person who is the subject of the donation. Wording must be approved by the Environmental Services Department with the City of Orillia.

Plaque Sizes:

Orillia Bench

The tags are laser engraved black on a gold plastic material and covered with clear lexan. The plaque is 6.5 cm (2.5 inches) in height and 20.5 cm (8 inches) in length. A maximum of five lines and approximately 30 characters per line is recommended for aesthetic reasons. The plaque is attached to the bench.

Tree Plaque

The tags are laser engraved black on a gold plastic material and covered with clear lexan. The plaque is 12.75 cm (5 inches) in height and 12.75 cm (5 inches) in length. A maximum of eight lines and approximately 15 characters per line is recommended for aesthetic reasons. The plaque is mounted on a post which is placed in front of the tree.

Sample inscriptions:

JOHN SMITH SHARING YOUR LOVE OF PARKS & LAKES YOUR FAMILY & FRIENDS	JOHN SMITH COME SIT WITH ME AND REST AWHILE BRISK WALKS - WISTFUL TALKS REST EASY JANE SMITH & FAMILY	JOHN SMITH LOVING HUSBAND, FATHER & GRANDFATHER REMEMBERED ALWAYS
JOHN SMITH LIVING, LOVING THE LAKE AND THIS VIEW	GOOD PEOPLE ARE ALWAYS WELCOME JOHN SMITH	MEET YOU ON THE PIER JOHN E. SMITH FROM ALL THE FAMILY
FOR FRIENDS AND STROLLERS ALIKE, TO SIT AND ENJOY THE PASSING SCENE JOHN SMITH	REST AWHILE & CHERISH THE PEACEFULNESS & BEAUTY JOHN, JANE AND JUNIOR SMITH	"MAN MUST DO GOOD TO HIS FELLOW MAN" JOHN SMITHSEE YOU
FOR JOHN & JANE SMITH MUCH LOVE FROM FAMILY & FRIENDS	JOHN A. SMITH SHARING YOUR LOVE FOR THE LAKE, FISHING, AND - DOGS JOHN AND JANE BROWN	STILL ENJOYING LIFE'S SIMPLE PLEASURES JOHN SMITH

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STANARD TREE SPECIES FOR DONATION PROGRAM

Species	Reach height of	Spread
Hackberry	70ft	60ft
Ivory Silk Lilac	25ft	15ft
Little Leaf Linden	50ft	25ft
Amur Maple	20ft	15ft
Red Maple	70ft	40ft
Sugar Maple	70ft	40ft
Bur Oak	65ft	65ft
Red Oak	60ft	50ft
White Oak	65ft	40ft
Swamp White Oak	50ft	50ft
Down Serviceberry	25ft	10ft
Automn Blaze Pear	35ft	25ft
Ginkgo (Maiden Hair)	50ft	35ft

The species of trees listed above are approved for the Tree Donation Program. When a specific species is requested the City Arborist will have final determination as to the species and location.